



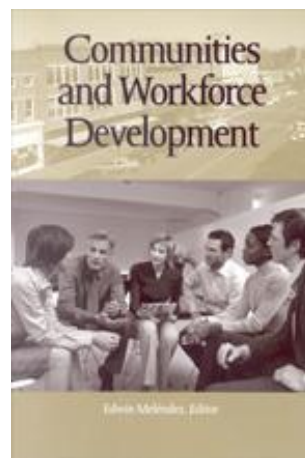
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## Community Colleges as Workforce Intermediaries: Building Career Ladders for Low-Wage Workers

Joan Fitzgerald  
*Northeastern University*



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# 11

## **Community Colleges as Workforce Intermediaries**

### **Building Career Ladders for Low-Wage Workers**

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#### **OVERVIEW**

When Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) was enacted in 1996, the country was experiencing a tight labor market, which created vacancies for many new workers. Yet even in this booming economy, the employment and earnings prospects for job seekers leaving welfare was dismal. Today, openings in the service-sector occupations that former TANF clients have been filling (e.g., retail clerk, lawn service technician, certified nursing assistant, child care provider) are once again growing, but pay in these low-skill jobs is still near the minimum wage and has not increased in real terms in more than two decades. Indeed, despite record economic growth in the five year period after TANF was passed, over one-fifth of male and almost one-third of female workers earned poverty-level wages (Mishel, Bernstein, and Schmitt 1999).

These figures are not merely a reflection of more people working part-time. Although more full-time jobs are available to help people make the transition from welfare to work, a report by the Conference Board found that the number of full-time workers who are poor increased from 1997 to 1998 (Barrington 2000, p. 4). This study estimates the number of working poor in the United States at between four and five million. The cause of this trend is an increase in the relative share

**Table 11.1 Change in Employment (%), by Pay Category, 1963–98**

Industry	% of Employment	
	1963	1998
High-paying	28	21
Middle-paying	37	16
Low-paying	35	63

SOURCE: The Conference Board.

of low-skill, low-wage employment, largely driven by the shift from manufacturing to services (Table 11.1).

Clearly, long-term economic independence will not be achieved simply by moving people off TANF and into dead-end jobs. Low-wage workers have to be able to advance into more highly skilled and better paying jobs. To do so, they need to continually upgrade their skills.

Community college vocational programs are uniquely poised to provide the training needed for low-wage workers to advance into these better paying jobs. Most of the nation’s community colleges have developed short-term training programs, some specifically for TANF clients. A few community colleges are attempting to build on these programs by offering courses and programs for students after initial placement to prepare them to advance on the job. This report presents best practice in these programs.

My intent, however, is not simply to present best practice. Cumulatively, even best practice programs will have very limited impact if the economy is creating too many low-paying and dead-end jobs. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to succeed at creating career ladders and wage progression opportunities because they have the potential to influence the structure of employment. Many community colleges engage in economic development activities that provide technical assistance to businesses to help them become high performance work organizations.<sup>1</sup>

These programs seldom have any connection to the vocational programs community colleges offer for people moving off welfare. In both types of programs, however, community colleges act as labor market intermediaries that not only connect supply and demand but also attempt to influence demand. To the extent they are successful in these programs, community colleges can help to create better paying jobs

as well as provide the training for people to fill them. Going to scale with career ladder and wage progression strategies means that community colleges have to convince employers to create more middle-paying jobs.

This chapter examines the extent to which community colleges play a more active role than in the past in encouraging employers to restructure jobs, given the proliferation of low-wage jobs. Three highly successful community college programs that focus on career ladders or wage progression are presented:

- Job Ladder Partnership, Shoreline Community College (Seattle metropolitan area)
- Essential Skills Partnership, Community College of Denver
- Environmental Health and Safety Program, South Seattle Community College

I highlight the elements of the programs that are behind their success and discuss more broadly the extent to which community colleges can be intermediaries that influence employers to create better jobs. The discussion focuses on the structure of employment, the policy environment, and how community colleges institutionalize programs with limited funding streams.

The sites were identified through informal interviews with community college administrators, membership organization representatives, and researchers. The three colleges chosen were mentioned repeatedly as ones trying to build career ladders into their certificate and degree programs, particularly those programs targeting Welfare-to-Work clients.

At each site, interviews were conducted with faculty and administrators, the college president, business partners, and social service agency and community organization partners. In addition to these sources, the cases are based on college documents and evaluation data.

## **COMMUNITY COLLEGES AS LABOR MARKET INTERMEDIARIES**

About two-thirds of community colleges have short-term vocational programs geared to welfare recipients (Meléndez and Falcón 1999).

Most of these last from three to six months, are noncredit, and do not articulate with related degree programs. In 1997 I was part of a research team that identified best practice in these programs (see Fitzgerald and Jenkins 1997). In this project we identified teaching innovations such as creating learning communities and integrating literacy with vocational instruction. We examined how community colleges formed partnerships to provide the intensive support services needed by this population to finish programs and adjust to the world of work. We also noted the concern that many of the dedicated community college faculty and staff conveyed over how the forthcoming welfare reform would impact their programs. Staff at LaGuardia Community College's highly effective welfare reform program, the College Opportunity to Prepare for Employment (COPE), expressed pride in having moved many former welfare clients from basic literacy to an associate degree in three years. Yet they feared that the time limits and "work first" requirements of the recently passed welfare reform legislation would undercut their ability to continue the program.

Indeed, their fears proved justified. New York has not invested savings from the reduction in welfare caseloads into education and training (see Emsellem 2000). Since New York City's version of Welfare-to-Work, the Work Experience Program (WEP), gives workfare priority over education, funds for COPE have been reduced (see McCormick [1999] for details on state and city funding of public assistance in New York). Even as it cut COPE funds, the city expanded the program from 4 to 10 campuses. As a result, LaGuardia's COPE classes have tripled in size while funding has dwindled. The counseling and case management that made the program so successful have been reduced drastically. Staff have been forced to select students requiring less remediation. COPE students are now eligible only for certificate programs of one year or less, reducing the possibility that they will be able to obtain jobs that will move them out of poverty.

Community college Welfare-to-Work programs throughout the country have faced similar constraints. Work first has forced many community colleges to do more creaming and less training. But there has been another response. Some community colleges are developing a second generation of programs that still use short-term training to get people into jobs quickly but also have explicit steps for continuing training after students become employed. These programs provide real

opportunities for wage progression and occupational upgrading that are not present in most Welfare-to-Work programs.

The three career ladder programs described in this report take different approaches to career ladders and focus on different industries. The Job Ladders program at Shoreline Community College has pathways (curricula) in manufacturing, customer relations, health services, and information technology. South Seattle Community College is experimenting with offering modules instead of courses in environmental health and safety. The Essential Skills Program at Community College of Denver has several job ladder career tracks but has been most successful in early childhood education and medical instrument technology.

Although relatively new, these programs are showing impressive results in both job placement and advancement. Their success is mostly a function of identifying a limited number of occupations that have relatively high starting wages, minimal entry-level requirements, and opportunities for advancement. Yet studies from the Economic Policy Institute and the Conference Board reveal there are few jobs with these characteristics. This is not simply a supply-side problem that can be solved by providing more education and training programs. It is a demand-side problem of an economy not creating enough jobs that allow entry-level workers to advance. Because of community colleges' economic development mission, a lot of hope has been placed in those institutions to be the intermediaries that not only link supply and demand but also influence employers to create better jobs (see Fitzgerald 1998a; Rosenfeld 2000; Rosenfeld and Kingslow 1995). Is this too much to expect of a community college? To answer this question, we need to have a better sense of what is meant by a labor market intermediary.

Labor market intermediaries connect people to jobs. Their varying roles can be placed on a continuum, based on the extent to which they try to influence factors of supply and demand. The most basic intermediaries don't add value to the supply; they simply make connections. Headhunters, for example, help employers find the most qualified people for specific jobs. They operate at the high end of the labor market, finding highly qualified people for top jobs in firms or organizations. The U.S. Employment Service, which helps unemployed workers find jobs, is also in the category of connector. The \$80, on average, that it spends on each participant reduces that person's unemployment insurance pay-

ments by about two weeks (Osterman, 1999, p. 135). At both the high and the low end of the labor market, temporary agencies also connect people to jobs. Although many Welfare-to-Work programs are built on the concept of "temp to perm," there is increasingly a dark side to this type of intermediary. Proliferating temp agencies working through a network of hiring halls in Chicago's inner-city neighborhoods provide manual day labor for suburban employers. In the crudest sense they are intermediaries, but as Peck and Theodore (2001, p. 4) show, their actual function is to assist firms in exploiting workers "whose social and economic circumstances render them contingent." At best, connectors reduce the length of unemployment. At worst, they are exploitive.

Placement intermediaries provide some combination of job training, education, and social support services to prepare clients for the labor market. Since most middle-class people have access to education and social networks through which jobs are found, placement intermediaries work mostly with low-income groups. Many community-based organizations (CBOs) have become quite effective in this arena. A large literature identifies the specific program elements and documents how organizations network to provide the comprehensive set of services needed to move people from welfare to work, often into living-wage jobs (see Meléndez 1996; Harrison, Weiss, and Gant 1995; Meléndez and Harrison 1998; Harrison and Weiss 1996; Lautsch and Osterman 1998). Many community colleges also network with CBOs and social service agencies to provide support services, but some offer them on their own (see Fitzgerald and Jenkins 1997). Both CBOs and community colleges develop relationships with employers to ensure they are providing the right skills and to extract commitments to hire program graduates. There is seldom any attempt to influence employers to increase wages, add benefits, or improve the quality of jobs.

A progressive intermediary attempts to work on both the supply and the demand side of the labor market. Since community colleges provide education and training and many have an economic development mission, they have the potential to address both supply and demand side issues. Many community colleges assist firms not only in adopting new technology, but in upgrading the skills of their workers. Most states fund community colleges to do business outreach and technology transfer (see Fitzgerald 1998b). By providing technical assistance in manufacturing modernization and customized training, community

colleges have the potential to maintain and even increase the number of high performance workplaces in the local economy. To the extent that providing these services to employers results in more employers taking a higher wage and skill path, community colleges can have some impact on local labor market demand. Yet there is little evidence to date that community colleges have the leverage needed to convince employers to change if the low road is profitable.

In the career ladder and wage progression programs presented below, community colleges are attempting to convince employers to increase pay, add benefits, create advancement opportunities, and consider internal promotions that would not have been considered before, as higher quality and more stable workers become available through their training. I present the cases individually before discussing the extent to which the programs allow the community colleges to act as progressive intermediaries.

## **THE THREE COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

The programs included are not necessarily best practice since most of them are too new to have much data on long-term career progression. They were chosen because they illustrate innovation in focusing on career ladders or wage progression. The case study presentations do not provide comprehensive information on the entire community college or even on related programs. Rather, the details on the programs are used to frame the discussion on limitations imposed by the structure of the economy and by institutional factors, and on how state policy can support wage progression strategies. Each of these issues speaks to the capacity of community colleges to be labor market intermediaries.

### **Shoreline Community College Job Ladder Partnership Program**

Shoreline Community College in Seattle is one of the few community colleges integrating career ladders into its Welfare-to-Work programs. The Job Ladder Partnership involves Shoreline and six other community or technical colleges with employers in creating work and learning pathways in four occupational clusters:



- manufacturing
- customer relations
- health services
- information technology

The areas were chosen because of local demand in occupations in these sectors which pay family wages and offer benefits. Further, these clusters have relatively low entry-level skill requirements yet offer opportunities for advancement with readily available training.

Funding for the program is the result of the commitment of Washington governor Gary Locke to focus welfare reform on moving people out of poverty, not just off welfare. Locke sees the state's community college system as essential to accomplishing this goal. To realize the necessary funding, in 1998 the State of Washington made an initial transfer of \$17 million from the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. The funds were earmarked for developing programs to promote job advancement and wage progression. In 1999 an additional \$20 million was allocated for the programs.

Three programs were established at Shoreline with the funds:

- 1) A 12-week pre-employment training program that links to the needs of one employer or a group of employers.
- 2) A work-based learning program that provides tuition assistance to serve as a bridge between free tuition and eligibility for federal Pell Grants. Any parent under 175 percent of the poverty line and working 20 hours weekly is given free tuition to any community college technical program, usually for one or two quarters, until Pell eligibility kicks in.
- 3) Professional and technical education redesign and delivery. This program designates funds to community colleges for redesigning programs to make it easier for students to combine school and work (e.g., by offering evening and weekend courses), to shorten programs, and to add more certificate programs.

In 1999 another work-study program was added for TANF recipients. This program provides part-time employment, usually with CBOs, for students enrolled in college courses. Work-study jobs must be related to the student's course of study and can last no longer than two aca-

ademic quarters. Students can work in the private sector or on campus.

By the time the funds were allocated, Shoreline's Workforce and Economic Development Division was already experimenting with welfare reform programs based on career ladders. One program prepared students to be billing specialists, then provided training for them to move up to medical reimbursement specialists, and from there into a nationally certified program in health care information technology. The program had tremendous success both in placing students in entry-level jobs and in stimulating students to return for more training. Building on this success, Dr. Holly Moore, vice president for workforce and economic development at Shoreline, called a meeting of area community and technical colleges to coordinate a response to the new workforce development funds. The six community colleges serving the suburban parts of the county agreed to collaborate in program planning and development. The goal of the partnership was to share resources and connections in order to serve employers and students better.

Each of the colleges had independent relationships with employers, maintained by "customer service representatives." Under the partnership, the customer service representative at any given college represents all of the colleges. Representatives with strong existing relationships with employers in one of the sectors serve all of the colleges in that sector. In other cases, representatives serve businesses in all four focus sectors in a geographic region. The point is to build on preexisting relationships. Sharing business partners allows the schools to fill job orders more efficiently. Since the schools are on different schedules, at least one of them is likely to have graduates at a time when an employer has hiring needs.

The business partners are essential to the program. Each college has one lead staff member in charge of employer outreach. Business partners are assigned to an outreach specialist based on which specialist has the best relationship with that employer, as opposed to by geography or industry. Of course, colleges with strong programs in a given occupational area tended to have the best employer connections. The partners work closely with staff on developing curricula and also provide instructors for some courses. Approximately one-third of job placements are with partner employers. Another third is with other employers in the same industry, and the remainder is with employers not in the industry for which training was provided.

Part of the work in developing partnerships with employers is adapting the programs to include specific skills employers need. Although some partner employers are committed to hiring program graduates, they have not all approved the curriculum of each program. This will be a long process, as many employers define the same job quite differently. A medical technician, for example, may have different job responsibilities in different hospitals. But through the partnership of colleges, each institution can tailor its program to the needs of a specific employer. Employers consistently emphasize good work habits and trainability over specific occupational skills. Thus, two-thirds of Shoreline's pre-employment training (PET) curriculum focuses on life and employability skills, job search skills, world of work instruction, and basic skills.

The retention specialist shows the student diagrams of career pathways that identify many possibilities for advancement, then works with the student on choosing one of the paths. Shoreline first started testing the effectiveness of intensive retention services through the college's participation in a project sponsored by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV). The project funds community colleges in several states in efforts to help students understand the importance of getting and keeping a job and moving on to the next level. The next level may be a pay increase or a totally different career path. Shoreline started the intensive retention services with its Computer Numerical Control (CNC) program. After two quarters of instruction, most CNC graduates take entry-level jobs paying anywhere between \$8.50 and \$15.00 an hour, depending on how well they perform.

TANF recipients get authorization from their DSHS case manager before entering the program, then go through an assessment to determine barriers. Typical problems include lack of housing, transportation, or child care, dealings with the court system, and domestic violence. The case manager seeks to determine whether the timing is right for that individual, since the program has a strict attendance policy. If it seems that the applicant's problems can be managed while he or she is in the program, the student is referred to appropriate support services.

### **The Job Ladder Partnership**

A guiding principle of Shoreline's Job Ladder Partnership is to combine education and work as much as possible. Students go through

an initial assessment and are then placed into the pre-employment program, work, remedial classes, or English as a Second Language (ESL). As soon as students have enough skills to begin an entry-level job in one of the chosen sectors, they have to combine work and continuing education. Students develop a career plan early on and work with a counselor to keep moving ahead on their career goals.

The two steps in the program are described below.

### **Pre-employment training (PET)**

In this 12-week program students acquire life and work skills. They develop a career plan and identify the education and training required to allow them to achieve it. Students select between evening (weekdays, 5:00–9:30 p.m.) or weekend (Friday–Sunday) sessions. They also select one of three pathways—manufacturing assembly, office occupations (information technology), or health services (basic caregiver). Students interested in non-office customer service positions are referred to other Job Ladder Partnership colleges for call center training. In addition to the 7.5 hours per week of occupational skills instruction, each student acquires 14.5 hours of basic and soft skills, taught through workshops in industrial safety/first aid and worker rights and responsibilities, and through classes in life/employability skills, job search skills, and basic computer skills. Syllabi for these courses are quite detailed, outlining the skill competencies, expectations, and weekly course material to be covered.

A computer laboratory offers supervised, self-paced instruction in keyboarding, computer software, and using the Internet. Students requiring basic skills remediation are referred to college Adult Basic Education/General Equivalency Degree (ABE/GED) or ESL programs, or to the college's English, math, or reading and writing learning laboratories. Students do not have to work during this part of the program, although 30–40 percent do.

When students complete the program, they receive a certificate. In many program areas, Shoreline is moving away from conferring degrees and toward bestowing skill-based credentials. This is part of a broader trend at both the community college and the high school level. In fact, both Washington and Oregon already have plans to require that students earn skill-based certificates of mastery in order to receive high school diplomas. To develop such certificates, Shoreline and other com-

munity colleges work with employers to identify a list of tasks workers must learn to perform for specific occupations. Programs are then redesigned to include these tasks, and performance criteria are developed for students to demonstrate their competence.

### **Placement and advancement through career ladders**

After completing the PET comes the second step: students must work at least 20 hours a week to continue in the program. Upon entering the PET program students begin working with a retention specialist and the program's placement services manager, who refer them to one of the partner employers. Toward the end of the program the retention specialists begin working closely with the student and with the program's job developer. The retention specialists meet with students weekly to discuss job searches and to help them anticipate what their personal lives will be like once they are working. Students are placed based on their performance. Students are not graded, but they must have a 70 percent proficiency rating in all of their classes to earn a certificate. Students with high proficiency ratings are placed with partner companies, while those who do not perform as well are placed with other companies.

Shoreline has two staff members dedicated to retention. A third is provided for TANF students through TRAC (Training, Rehab, Assessment and Consultation), a for-profit organization contracted by DSHS. Either Nate Windle, manager for retention services, or TRAC retention specialist Johanna Hedge maintains weekly contact with new graduates during their first 30 days on the job. Depending on the student, contact is reduced to once every two weeks between 30 and 60 days on the job. During this period, any number of issues can arise. Windle offers several examples of how specialists work with recent graduates. When one man lost his transportation, Windle helped him to get a bus pass and to make a device to carry his tool box on the bus. Typically students need help with figuring out how to get around such barriers, but sometimes, Windle explains, it's other issues, such as how to budget money to last between paychecks. "One of the things I try to bring home," he says, "is that if you don't have a plan for yourself, someone will have it for you. Then you're stuck." Whether the issue is child care or transportation, staff help workers to see that they need to have backup plans. Hedge adds that she often provides moral support for students struggling to adjust to holding a full-time job. Sometimes children are resentful that

their parent isn't available as much, and the student feels guilty. Others need help in selecting appropriate work clothes. Several students, now that they are earning more, seek assistance in moving their families to safer neighborhoods. Whatever the issue, Windle says, "the idea of the program is that they don't have to figure everything out for themselves."

After the 90-day probation period, staff ask participants to begin thinking about their future with the company. "If they don't like their jobs," Windle explains, "I ask them to visualize staying for three to six months so they can get their work portfolio together." If participants are unhappy with their work, Windle encourages them to think about going back to school or to talk to their employers about advancement possibilities. "As much as we want them to keep their jobs, we want them to be happy," he continues, "and they don't know what [particular jobs entail] if they've never worked. After all, we've all had time to do job exploration—I certainly did it in the military." For the most part, staff maintain contact by phone.

For participants who are dissatisfied in their jobs, Windle identifies courses they could take at Shoreline, such as CNC Programming, that would lead to a better position and a raise. This and other courses take only one quarter, so the participants can see a real connection between education and job advancement. "What's hard," Windle says, "is that they typically have to do it on their own time. Although some employers pay for courses, many do not."

A new computerized career-planning tool, the Career Pathway Passport, allows students, with the support and assistance of their retention specialist, to develop career plans and document their progress. Using the interactive program, students begin career planning with a counselor but can continue modifying their goals and charting their progress independently. The Passport has two databases—one listing available jobs in the four career pathways offered by the employer partners, and another containing the education programs offered by the six partner colleges in these fields. College and employer contacts are listed. The Shoreline Web site describes how students use the system:

"The career transcript portion of the passport works by using pull down menus and forms. Every time a student enters or completes a training program or job they get either an entry or exit "visa" as appropriate. Employment or training that is not already part of the database can also be entered and included in the list of visas. Any change in

employment can lead to a new visa. The visa system provides a hook for maintaining contact with those workers who are in the system, since they will want to come in and get their passports updated periodically with new visas.”

The career-planning portion of the passport demystifies for students how they can combine work and education to climb a job ladder. Using the pull down menus listing database options, the retention specialist and the student together select training programs and jobs in the career pathway that take the student from where he is to his long term employment goal. Contact information lets the student know whom to call to take advantage of the next employment or training opportunity on his customized career pathway. The system utilizes software technology to create a career-planning tool, at the core of which is a database of local opportunities.

### **Support Services**

The retention specialist maintains contacts with community organizations that help poor people enter the labor market, and she refers students to these support services. Many students, for example, visit a community-run store that provides free business clothes. The retention specialist also refers students to Shoreline’s manager for family support services, a support person provided through the state’s WorkFirst program, who directs them to one of three DSHS offices in the area to ask about social services for which they might be eligible.

Students are responsible for making their own arrangements for transportation and child care. They are encouraged to inquire with DSHS to see if they are eligible for transportation and child care funds. Child care is provided at the college, and most students receive full or partial subsidies through DSHS. If partial, students are required to pay the difference between DSHS payments and the cost of services. Students sign an agreement that acknowledges their responsibility in this area. The agreement further stipulates that they will be expelled from the program and will not receive a certificate of completion if they miss more than four sessions (two sessions for weekend students) or fail to meet with their retention specialist.

## Outcomes

The completion and placement rates of the program compare quite well to best-practice Welfare-to-Work programs throughout the country. The overall program completion rate is 74.3 percent, which is very high for a 12-week program. The rate varied from 56.6 percent for Winter 1999–2000 to 86.6 percent in the Genie program for Fall 1998 (Table 11.2).

Wages fell in the second year, and one reason for the drop was that more single women were enrolled for that period. For the most part,

**Table 11.2 Pre-Employment Training Outcomes Summary 1998–2000**

Cohort	Total enrolled	Total completers	Total employed	With benefits	Empl. rate (%)	Average wage (\$)
Genie Fall 1998 <sup>a</sup>	45	39	28	23	72	11.85
Genie Spring 1999 <sup>a</sup>	15	11	9	6	82	11.40
Job Ladder Spring 1999	45	37	29	21	78	9.60
Job Ladder Fall 1999	60	45	35	19	78	9.18
Job Ladder 1999–2000	53	30	24	12	80	9.28
Job Ladder Spring 2000	60	—	—	—	—	—
Subtotal FY 1998–99	105	87	66	50	75	10.80
Subtotal FY 1999–2000	179	75	59	3	79	10.05
FY 1998–2000	284	162	125	80	77	10.50

<sup>a</sup> All students were enrolled in a customized training program for Genie Industries, a local supplier of hydraulic lifts. — = data not available.

SOURCE: Shoreline Community College.



staff have not been able to entice women into the higher paying manufacturing jobs. Another reason was that the second year students had more serious barriers to employment. It was harder to get them through the program in 12 weeks with the skills they needed to qualify for positions with employer partners. As a result, they were placed in less preferable, lower wage jobs at the start, with the hope of helping them move up after placement.

Retention and advancement data for the 41 students who got jobs in the Spring 1999 training cycle show that the average hourly entry wage for these students was \$9.57. About half of all the students have received wage increases since starting. The current average wage for those who have experienced a wage or job change is \$10.29, representing a 7.5 percent annual increase.

## **Funding**

The program receives approximately \$2,500 per student from the state's pre-employment training, tuition assistance, and program redesign funds. Retention services are partially funded by a grant from Public/Private Ventures (\$50,000), and by DSHS (for a TRAC retention specialist). This funding covers the cost of training and retention services, but the current funding levels do not acknowledge that students need retention services for at least a year after placement. As new students enter, the caseloads of the two full-time staff members providing retention counseling continue to increase.

The college adds \$55,000 in in-kind contributions for community college and employer sponsored training at the work site. DSHS provides \$17,000 per year in child care subsidies.

The state of Washington allocated \$28.8 million to 34 community colleges for fiscal year 2001. Community colleges still had to apply for each program, but overall there was more funding available. These funds broke down into seven line items:

- \$7.1 million for short-term (12-week) customized pre-employment programs that are co-sponsored by an employer. Funds are allocated to applicants.
- \$3.6 million for college work-study for TANF recipients and the working poor, allocated by a formula that apportions slots based

on the number of eligible students at the college.

- \$6.6 million in work-based learning tuition for those working and going to school, allocated to colleges on a formula basis.
- \$4.4 million for support staff with which to operate programs, including financial aid officers, advisors, and counselors, allocated on a formula basis with three different support levels.
- \$1 million in workplace basic literacy or ESL programs that recipients take while working. Funded on a project basis, based on application.
- \$5 million for Families that Work, a program combining literacy and parent education. Available to community colleges and CBOs based on application.
- \$1.1 million for child care on campuses.

All of these funds were allocated from the state's TANF caseload savings. Expenditures on welfare cash grants have gone down by \$250 million a year since TANF was introduced, although total expenditures have increased as the funds have been shifted to other services for the poor and working poor. Ken Miller, WorkFirst coordinator of the Office of Financial Management, says that the state is spending \$50 million more on child care and \$100 million more on training, job placement, and wage progression strategies as a result of the cash grant savings. Miller notes that the \$28.8 million allocated to community colleges represents a new relationship between the old welfare system and community colleges.

## Summary

Shoreline is out in front of most community colleges in creating career ladder programs for low-income populations. To get there has required significant rethinking of how and when courses are offered, what makes an effective business partnership, and how to provide pre- and post-placement counseling to students. Few of these changes could have been made if not for significant financial support from the state of Washington. Furthermore, a cooperative environment, both among community colleges and between employers and community colleges, facilitated the high placement and retention rates. But the colleges were unable to sustain the partnership because of lack of funding. Shoreline's program continues independently.

## **South Seattle Community College Environmental Health and Safety Program**

Administrators and faculty at South Seattle Community College (SSCC) see curriculum modules as the wave of the future in technical education. Modules differ from regular courses in that they are not scheduled according to the fixed semester calendar; instead, they merely require that students demonstrate performance-based competencies to pass them. Two forces are driving the move to modules. First, the time limits and work first requirements of welfare reform mean that students need short-term training to prepare for work. Since TANF recipients are under pressure to find work quickly, they cannot wait for the next semester to start. Further, even a 12-week commitment can be difficult for someone not used to working or going to school. Modules offer a way to divide a longer course or program into manageable segments with job advancement connected to each of them. Second, many employers are looking for ways their employees can pick up specific skills quickly to perform their jobs. Modules allow busy people, many of whom already have degrees, to learn a specific skill without taking a semester-long course that may cover a lot of material they already know.

To be more responsive to the needs of students and business, South Seattle President David Mitchell wants to see the approach institutionalized. The enrollment statistics support him; less than half of enrollees are full-time day students. The late interim associate dean, Laura Parkins, was assigned to work with faculty and staff on developing more modular programs. It will take time to reach Mitchell's goal. It's a bigger task than taking an existing course and dividing it into segments. It involves working with individual employers and industry associations to identify skill standards and to establish performance-based criteria for mastering the skills. Programs are designed so that each module is connected to specific skill standards. Typically, short-term certificate courses do not provide credits toward a degree. A unique aspect of the modules being developed at South Seattle is that they cumulate credits toward both certificates and degrees.

The Environmental Health and Safety program highlighted in this case study illustrates how work and learning can be combined so that students can find jobs quickly and then take manageable steps to continue their education and increase their earnings. Further, it describes

the role of business and community partners in developing a high-quality curriculum and supporting students as they make difficult life transitions. On the demand side, it reveals that as employers find better quality workers who stay on the job longer, they may be willing to turn temporary jobs into permanent ones, pay better wages, and provide benefits.

### **The Environmental Health and Safety Program**

Three factors converged to motivate South Seattle administrators and faculty to create a new modular program in environmental health and safety. The first was declining enrollment. With enrollment diminishing, faculty and staff of the associate degree program in toxicology, chemistry and hazardous materials called a technical advisory board meeting in August of 1999 to ask board members how to improve the program. They learned that there was high demand for skilled technicians in the field but that the program was not meeting the needs of employers. The program covered theory, rules, and regulations but not hands-on experience or recognized certifications. The employers desperately needed people with the certifications required by the state of Washington to work with specific substances.

The second factor was a particularly motivated board member, Brad Schroeder, vice president and co-owner of TCB Industrial. TCB provides supplemental labor for environmental cleanups. The company's clients include construction and environmental cleanup firms and county, city, and state governments. Its typical jobs involve railroad accidents, Superfund site cleanup, household hazardous waste collection, and oil spills. The firm employs 107 people in Seattle and 60 in a Portland, Oregon, facility.

Three years ago, when Schroeder was having difficulty finding employees with the basic 40-hour hazardous materials certificate required for all cleanup jobs, he started a training program at TCB. Schroeder chose this route over working with South Seattle because of his experience teaching at another community college. In that job, he had quit in frustration when he was required to teach material to students working in the environmental cleanup field that both he and the students knew was not providing them with the skills they needed to do their jobs. Since the community college was not willing to change its cur-

riculum, Schroeder decided to create a school that would offer all of the individual certifications required for brownfields certification. Once he had gotten that school going, the South Seattle initiative interested him because it would complement the school he had already created and enable him to expand his business to meet the growing demand for labor in the environmental cleanup field. Schroeder mobilized employers in the field to work with South Seattle in revamping its program.

The third factor for administrators was that redesigning the program into modules would allow the college to create wage progression opportunities for graduates of its pre-employment program in hazardous waste management. This program, funded by the Washington Community College Board, was designed for TANF recipients.

### **How the South Seattle program works**

The program begins with a core of 10 modules that provide 14 college credits and certification in brownfields. The modules range from 8 to 24 hours of instruction.<sup>2</sup> Students must pass a performance-based examination to earn a certificate in each module. Then they can follow a path toward either a technician or a supervisor level certificate.

The HAZWOP (hazardous waste operator) module is considered the minimum requirement for employment, even for workers with advanced degrees. It provides 40 hours of instruction in hazardous waste handling. This module was already being offered as a TANF pre-employment course. It is offered from two to three times a year, usually to classes of 20 students. Once a person has the introductory and HAZWOP modules, they can pursue the other core requirement modules. When the program becomes fully operative, modules will be offered during evenings and weekends to accommodate work schedules.

As workers accumulate certifications, they become eligible for more types of jobs. Those certified for confined spaces can clean ship holds and machine pits for firms such as Boeing, a major employer in the Seattle area. Those with the blood borne pathogen certificate are often sent to the University of Washington to clean HVAC systems in medical research departments. Those with the lock out–tag out certificate work in many industrial settings, locking out all energy sources while they do cleanup or repairs. HAZWOP graduates start at \$11.50 per hour and can go as high as \$22.50 per hour for some certificates. Graduates of the first environmental cleanup module are qualified to work in disposal

of hospital waste, cleaning of contaminated sites such as shipyards, and recycling of hazardous materials such as paint. TCB and several other firms, including Foss (an oil distributor and refinery) and Boeing, hire certificate holders.

The technician level certificate prepares individuals to conduct assessments for the presence of hazardous materials such as asbestos. The supervisor level certificate has been popular among technicians who were working as hazardous waste technicians for firms such as Boeing before many certification requirements were in effect. Boeing and many other companies are now requiring these workers to have degrees. This group has many of the specific skills but needs additional instruction in computers and in understanding the legislative environment and applying the legislation to workplace standards.

All of the 50–53 credits for these programs count toward the AAS degree in environmental health and safety. Associate degree graduates earn between \$30,000 and \$40,000 and in some cases considerably more. Flexible scheduling and modularization allow students to learn while working.

The increasing problem of brownfields assures continued labor market demand. Many banks now require that both commercial and residential properties have Phase I site assessments before they will approve a loan. The growing need for site assessment has created a certification for people able to do Phase I, II, and III assessments.<sup>3</sup> Further, many employers are required to have board certified industrial hygienists, safety professionals, and hazardous materials managers. People in these positions make sure companies stay within OSHA exposure limits, monitor compliance with health and safety procedures, develop emergency response plans, and establish company waste handling policies that meet legislative requirements. All three board certifications require students to pass a rigorous examination. People in these positions earn between \$40,000 and \$50,000 per year at the entry-level technician level.

Modules are taught by adjunct faculty, such as Schroeder, who have both field and teaching experience. Academic modules are taught by South Seattle faculty. Plans are under way to offer some of the more cut-and-dried modules, such as those dealing with the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, online. In these modules, students must become completely familiar with the legislative regulations that affect their work.

### **Support services**

Before the brownfields curriculum, some students taking HAZWOP were referred from DSHS or from community organizations. Keith Marler, workforce coordinator at South Seattle, noticed that students from the King County Jobs Initiative (KCJI) and Seattle Jobs Initiatives (SJI), who had case managers and an array of social service supports, had higher completion rates.<sup>4</sup> Based on this discovery, the college has developed partnerships with several community and trade organizations to provide the resources students need to finish their courses. As the TCB school joins its program with South Seattle, KCJI will place clients at both places and provide case management and support services for them.<sup>5</sup>

### **Funding**

Funding for developing the modularized curriculum comes from the state's TANF savings, which were reallocated to the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (see Shoreline case for details). The late interim associate dean Parkins and TCB's Schroeder developed grant proposals for funding the development of the AAS degree in environmental health and safety.

### **Summary**

The success of South Seattle's Environmental Health and Safety Program is a function of an industry characterized by occupations with clear requirements for advancement and a method of offering training that makes it easy for working people to build additional competencies. As with Shoreline, state funds are available for developing this and other programs to serve low-wage workers. It will be interesting to see if the programs being developed in other occupations obtain similar levels of employer involvement and willingness to work on career advancement.

### **Community College of Denver Essential Skills Program**

While community college programs in Washington and Oregon have received considerable state funds to create career ladder programs,

the Community College of Denver (CCD) has developed its career programs for TANF recipients through vocational certificates called Essential Skills. This program provides foundation skills in four separate career tracks (early childhood, financial services, manufacturing, and central supply technology). The college promotes the Essential Skills Program as a work first program since it requires internships, which count toward work-related activity. In developing this program, one of the college's goals is to serve as a model for other colleges in supporting both entry-level and incumbent workers. Five factors are behind the program's success: 1) vocational training in high-demand occupations, 2) a cohort approach that promotes group learning, 3) intensive career counseling, 4) internships, and 5) strong business partnerships.

Early childhood education and paraprofessional medical occupations are often considered low-wage, dead-end jobs. Indeed, few programs designed to move people up career ladders from entry-level positions have been successful (see Fitzgerald and Carlson 2000). Although limited in size and funding, The Essential Skills programs in early childhood and central supply technology have put students on a track to career advancement. Program Director Elaine Baker is especially proud of the college's success in early childhood education. "The research says that you can't take people on welfare and successfully place them in child care professions," she says. "Well we're doing it. It takes work, but our program has successfully prepared and placed 19 group leaders into the Denver child care community." Students who have completed the central supply certificate go on to try for national certification. Eight program graduates were expected to complete the tutorial for the October 2000 certification test (Meléndez and Suárez 1999).

### **The Essential Skills Program**

The philosophy behind Essential Skills is as important as the curriculum in understanding the program's success. A guiding principle of the program is that all learning takes place in relationships. The relationships developed through the program bond students with counselors, employers, their families, and one another. This "whole life" approach is proving to be quite successful.

The student-counselor relationship begins as soon as a student enters the program. Coordinators work with groups of 12–15 students



and see students daily. Baker points out that “Our folks require a lot of career planning. They don’t project themselves into the future very well. They live in an interpersonal world driven by crisis, which does not lend itself to long-term planning. As their lives stabilize they need people to work with them on doing that.”

Counseling includes more than helping students choose a career and an education plan: counselors help students undergo a shift from seeing themselves as being mostly incompetent to seeing themselves as learners capable of changing their lives.

The program creates an environment in which students can learn from one another. This is facilitated through group interaction and study sessions. Students can bring their children to dinner study sessions. Throughout the program students engage in classroom discussions, individual sessions with the transition coordinator, and facilitated group sessions to develop strategies for overcoming barriers to self sufficiency. Students focus on creating and maintaining circles of support to provide backup systems (e.g., for child care) to reduce the possibility of missing work. Further, as the relationships continue after employment, the group reinforces the individual’s professional identity. This approach requires coordinators and faculty to develop relationships with students based on trust, rather than on authority.

Another emphasis of the program is on understanding the nature of work relationships. The internships lay out expectations for jobs, and the program offers mentoring and workshops in which students can discuss their reactions to and problems with work. The main vehicle for this information is a course developed specifically for the program, “Communication for the Workplace.” One course topic is understanding performance appraisals and other types of feedback; another is managing conflict. The program views work as a culture where the newcomer doesn’t necessarily understand the rules. Baker elaborates on the need to create a basic shift in how coworkers and supervisors are perceived: “Our students need to understand that work is a transactional environment—that personal circumstances do not change the fact that the work needs to be done. An employer who points this out is not being unsympathetic or discriminatory. They need to understand and not personalize that.” The approach differs from most soft skills courses in both content and delivery. Content is blended with the everyday experiences that students are likely to encounter in their internships. Classroom ex-

changes are interactive, using problem solving and role playing. In addition to covering such basic skills such as writing a memo, students also go through exercises in listening, giving and receiving feedback, approaching superiors on the job, understanding learning styles, and accepting diversity in the workplace.

### **The Essential Skills Curriculum**

Students are recruited through the Denver Department of Human Services (DHS). In the month before entering the program most students participate in a series of classes and workshops provided by DHS that offer career counseling and teach communication and other life skills. In the first month at CCD students attend classes 35 hours weekly, which includes GED prep for those who need it, group time, and workshops. During the next three months students work 24 hours a week in paid internships and attend vocational classes for 15 hours. All students take the core, which includes computer literacy, a workshop in reading, writing, and speaking, and communication for the workplace (Table 11.3). Students in the early childhood program take an introductory course and a lab. Central supply technician students take a class in medical terminology. Students complete two credits of work readiness and three credits in reading, writing, and speaking in workplace situations.

Those with limited English proficiency take ESL classes during the internship period as well. Students are not required to have a high school diploma or GED to enter the program. They must have a seventh grade or above reading level. Tutoring and GED preparation are available during the program. Students who fall below the minimum reading level are required to enroll in developmental courses or work in the developmental studies labs. Central supply technicians are required to have a high school diploma or GED.

Depending on what electives are taken, certificates require up to 16 credits. All courses earn college-level credits. The certificates articulate to other degrees, and almost 25 percent of certificate earners continue to take courses toward an associate's degree. Although Essential Skills classes are self-contained because of scheduling around internships, staff attempt to mainstream students into regular college activities and services.

**Table 11.3 Essential Skills Certificate in Central Supply Technology**

Course number	Class title	Credits
<b>Workplace core</b>		
CIS 105	Introduction to the PC	2
REA 015	Reading, Writing, Speaking	3
COM 113	Communication for the Workplace	2
	Co-op Experience (credits may vary)	4
<b>Vocational core</b>		
CST 100	Central Supply Technology	3
HWE 100	Medical Terminology	2

Since most of the certificate classes are separate from other degree programs, female students are mainstreamed into the college community by getting them involved in the campus Women’s Center. The Center is an additional source of assistance in dealing with child care, transportation, domestic, or other issues that prevent students from attending or from performing well in the program. The Center replicates services offered by Essential Skills counselors, but the exposure is valuable because if students continue their education after completing the program, they are already acquainted with it should they need assistance.

Combining the internships with course work means that students understand the connection between what they are learning in class and what they do on the job. Further, students are evaluated on their performance in real situations during their vocational training.

**Career Ladders**

Although there are more job openings in financial services than in the other tracks, the progression from cashier to other rungs in banking is not clearly aligned to college course work, as in the other tracks. To address this, CCD has begun working with partner banks and the American Banking Institute to offer courses to program graduates. Although the child care and medical instrument technician positions do not have

the highest number of job openings of the four tracks, they offer more opportunities for career advancement.

Graduates of the early childhood education program have experienced the most career advancement of the four tracks, probably because the educational component of the program is the most clearly articulated. Essential Skills requires six credits in early childhood education. Group leaders must have six more credits, in addition to 1,395 hours of contact with children. Upon completion of the Essential Skills certificate students have completed nine credit hours in early childhood education and 650 contact hours with children, putting them well on their way to group leader certification. Over half of those completing Essential Skills in early childhood go on to fulfill the additional course work for becoming group leaders. Several students have completed the Colorado certificate programs for director's associate and director, and three students were scheduled to receive associate degrees in 2000. Group leader, director and director's associate are positions in high demand in the Denver area.

Central supply technicians sterilize instruments for hospital surgeries. While there are only about 30 openings per year in Denver in central supply, it is a position that is often used for lateral moves within hospitals. Certification in central supply brings a pay increase of between \$0.50 and \$1.00 per hour. Starting hourly wages are around \$9.00. The next rung on the ladder is surgical technology, a nine-month certificate course. Other possible moves are to certified nursing assistant or licensed practical nurse. Generally, people who go into the medical technician curriculum do not want to perform the type of hands on personal care required in these occupations.

## **Support Services**

Helping clients learn how to negotiate the world of support services is an important part of the program. This includes communicating effectively with the city's Human Services case managers on how to access other community resources, including child care, transportation, medical care, dental care, financial planning, housing, mental health services, and domestic violence resources. Students receive help in working around the inconsistent ways that policies and incentives are often implemented. Many services are introduced as part of the tran-

sition skills curriculum, while students work through more complex individual issues with the individual track coordinators or the clinical social worker on staff. DHS career track coordinators and Welfare-to-Work industry managers work closely with CCD track coordinators on recruitment, assessment, job placement, and support services issues.

A track coordinator is assigned to each cohort. The track coordinator keeps tabs on student attendance and performance for the duration of the program. Students discuss problems that may be affecting attendance or performance with the coordinator, and they jointly work out solutions. The coordinators do job placement and also keep track of student performance on the job. Finally, the track coordinators are the liaison between the program and the students' DHS case managers.

## **Outcomes**

The combined tracks of the Essential Skills program have a 70 percent completion rate and a 58 percent employment rate at completion. Six months after completion 77 percent of students are employed. The 1998 cohort had a 66 percent retention rate one year after completion. The average starting wage for the first year was \$7.51, and for the second year it was \$8.51.

Wages in child care increased during the same period. Early child care assistants started at \$6.50 an hour and group leaders usually began at \$8.00. Director's associates earned \$11.00 an hour in the Head Start programs. Almost all of the child care sites working with the program have benefit packages.

## **Funding**

All funding for program development and operation has come from the City of Denver's TANF and Welfare-to-Work dollars and from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). As of 2000, the annual project budget included \$422,261 in TANF dollars and \$145,974 in Welfare-to-Work funds to serve 100–125 students per year.

Specific courses have been developed using various funding sources. The Communications for the Workplace course was funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The Colorado Community College Board provides funds for curriculum development. Only limited funds

are available, however, so a large part of what the state office does is help colleges with finding funds and writing grants.

## **Summary**

Essential Skills has taken the first steps in moving from a Welfare-to-Work to a career ladders program. The whole life approach, which emphasizes learning how to build relationships in addition to building job-specific skills, addresses many of the problems that make the transition from welfare to work so difficult. The career ladders in child care and central supply technology are short. But for many students, climbing one or two rungs is quite an accomplishment. The president has made a strong commitment to the faculty to develop more career ladder programs in occupations and sectors that have greater opportunities for advancement. The state's Community College Board has supported the certificate approval process and has provided technical support throughout the program's development. Even with this support, staff are continually involved in securing grants for present operations as well as working toward the institutionalization of the program once the Welfare-to-Work funding streams are eliminated.

## **DISCUSSION: WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO INSTITUTIONALIZE WAGE PROGRESSION STRATEGIES?**

The set of factors influencing the extent to which community colleges can be successful in delivering wage progression programs includes the priorities of individual colleges as well as the broader policy environment. Because of the level of commitment demanded and the need to secure external resources, wage progression strategies have to be a priority from the top down to succeed. Once the decision has been made to implement such strategies, community colleges can learn much from one another about what program features work. State policies in Welfare-to-Work, incumbent worker training, and economic development have to be in place to support wage progression. The structure of labor market demand, however, ultimately determines the extent to which career and wage progression strategies can expand. As labor market intermediaries, community colleges can influence the skill demand

of local employers in a small number of cases. But it is difficult for any one organization or institution to act independently as a labor market intermediary, and certainly this is true if state policy does not support it. Labor market intermediaries—at least those with the goal of increasing access to and opportunities for better paying jobs—involve a network of organizations supported by state policy. These issues are discussed below, through seven principles gleaned from the experiences of the three colleges.

### **Community Colleges Need to Make Career Progression a Priority**

Community colleges are being asked to be more things to more people than ever before. Their students range from those who don't have high school diplomas or proficiency in English to those who have college degrees. Knowing that a college cannot be all things to all people, presidents must choose the areas in which their institutions will specialize. Career progression programs are typically built from Welfare-to-Work programs, which are not as glamorous or profitable as customizing training for business or developing new technology centers. Given the high levels of investment and low levels of support for Welfare-to-Work, the job of a president who makes this area a top priority is not easy. A president must have, or create, a faculty and staff that embrace this mission.

The college presidents I spoke with have done this in different ways. Shoreline, rather than forcing new programs on faculty who are already teaching full-time loads, uses adjunct faculty from industry. President John Lederer explains that the college's Workforce and Economic Development Office has been more successful if it first demonstrates the effectiveness of new programs and new teaching approaches, then lets faculty decide for themselves how the new programs can complement or feed into existing offerings. This strategy allowed the college to get the program up and running quickly while generating faculty support. Funds for program redesign are now available to entice faculty to alter their classes along the lines of the program—including evening and weekend scheduling, offering credit for prior knowledge and learning, and structuring more intensive, short-term courses that lead to certificates. South Seattle's president, David C. Mitchell, has encouraged faculty to develop independent relationships with employers in order to

make their programs more responsive to industry needs. An associate dean was assigned specifically to help faculty interested in developing modular curricula in collaboration with business.

The presidents have also given program staff considerable autonomy in developing programs. Elaine Baker, the Essential Skills program director at Community College of Denver, is able to hire faculty for the program. She emphasizes that this is important because the students have very different needs and learning styles than the mainstream student population. A previous study of the program found that some staff provided by the community college had low expectations for the students (see Meléndez and Suárez 2001). In hiring, Baker looks for faculty who don't have preconceived ideas of ability but are willing to provide more structure to and experiment with different teaching styles to facilitate learning.

Indeed, one of the most important factors in a program's success is a willingness to experiment with new approaches. President Windle explains that the Shoreline Job Ladders staff motivate one another to keep trying to improve how they do things. "We never say 'we've arrived.' We're always looking for ways to serve our folks better." This means the staff tries many things that don't work. "Failure is a learning tool here, not a reason to get your head cut off." This attitude is what it takes for administration and faculty to stay the course through years of program development, implementation, and continual fine-tuning.

### **Continuing Education Has to Be Flexible**

An increasing number of community college students work while attending school. Colleges are trying several strategies to make course offerings more flexible. One is to offer classes at more convenient times. Several of the programs offer classes on evenings and weekends. All three have frequent start-ups for programs. This means not only that there is little wait time between deciding on the program and starting, but also that if students have to drop out, they can pick up again quickly when their life circumstances improve.

To become even more flexible, community colleges are offering more certificate programs. The certificate approach allows the college to meet local labor market needs and add or eliminate programs as demand dictates. Because certificates typically are noncredit, they do not



require as many bureaucratic steps to get up and running. Some of the colleges offer credits with certificate courses that count toward associate's degrees. Although this strategy may mean that students without high school diplomas or GEDs are not eligible, credit accumulation toward degrees is essential for advancement in many fields.

South Seattle's modular programs provide another type of flexibility. The direct connection between completing modules and getting wage increases motivates workers to endure the hardship of working full-time while attending school. The late interim dean Laura Parkins and workforce coordinator Keith Marler suggested that modules are the wave of the future for community colleges. They noted, however, that the approach challenges how community colleges are organized. Modules are organized on demand, not by the regular academic calendar, and they often use adjunct faculty from industry. Indeed, modules are becoming standard for professional and technical training in many corporations. Some businesses have software to assess employee skills in multiple areas, and much of this assessment is done online. Employers like modules because an employee can attend classes to quickly learn the skills he needs for the job. Working with staff from the Washington State Board of Community Colleges, South Seattle is developing modularized, skill-based programs in electronics and emissions technology and has a grant to develop a program for the stevedore industry.

Denver's program is built less on flexibility than on replicating working life. Students spend a full day in a combination of classes, work-based instruction or internship, and negotiating social services. They are offered support and advice in managing the various aspects of their life, but they cannot avoid taking responsibility.

Another way institutions can make it easier to combine work and learning is to offer courses at the work site. But employers must make it easier as well by providing at least partial release time for employees to attend classes. Some union-sponsored skills upgrade programs, for example, offer classes that overlap shift changes (see Fitzgerald and Carlson 2000). Typically, employees quit one hour early or start one hour later to take a two-hour class. One hour is donated by the employer and one by the employee. Although none of the colleges have employer partners that are donating time for training, several staff suggested that they would request it at some point.

### **Continuing Education Has to Be Tied Directly to Job Advancement and Wage Progression**

For new labor market entrants the whole concept of planning for one's future may be new. Even if one wants to move up, the connection between further education and job advancement is not always evident. This is especially true for people employed in sectors where there are no career ladders. Shoreline's Career Ladders information technology students, for example, would have little way of knowing that a job as a call center operator for a software company could lead to a job as a Web page designer.

The value of Shoreline's Passport system for developing career plans is that it shows students both how they can move up in one company and how they can advance by moving into related occupations in different industries. Shoreline's Career Ladders students are supported by retention specialists in developing career plans, and once Passport is running, they will be able to use it to mark their progress and find jobs. Retention specialists are committed to working with each student for a minimum of one year or until the family is out of poverty. Passport is more interactive and useful than most job listings available to TANF recipients in particular and to community college students in general.

Community College of Denver offers similar help in mapping out career ladders, though it is done through a series of career awareness activities combined with individual vocational counseling. The educational coordinator, a grant funded staff person who works exclusively with the program, prepares an individual education plan with each student at the beginning of the semester and, as the students become more aware of career options, helps them plan their future course of work and study. The process allows students to map out realistic career ladders and to understand what they have to do to achieve their goals.

Some industries are more suited to this approach than others. In the environmental health and safety field, incentives for entry-level workers are quite obvious. Workers know the exact wages associated with each certification. The more certifications they have, the higher paying jobs they can get. With the modular curriculum offered by South Seattle, students can develop a plan for combining work and education that would be unmanageable under the semester system. Furthermore, the modules add up to credits for degrees that are in demand by employers. Even en-

vironmental engineers with baccalaureate degrees take South Seattle's modular courses to fulfill requirements for continuing education.

In sectors or occupations where career ladders are not as obvious, employers and community colleges can work together to identify ways of structuring work that build in career progression. Community College of Denver is beginning to do this with its banking partners.

### **State Government Has to Support Career Progression Programs**

Funding wage progression programs is a challenge. There are several funding issues that affect the ability of these programs to go full scale. One is how particular types of community college programs are funded. A second is how state welfare policy allocates funds for education and training, particularly savings realized through declining TANF rolls. Some states are reinvesting these funds into education and training, others are focusing on child care, and still others are letting them accumulate unspent. The third issue is how community colleges fit into overall state education reform.

Most community colleges receive funding from a combination of local property taxes, tuition, and state funds. States typically fund community colleges on a full-time equivalency (FTE) basis.<sup>6</sup> This means that the state allocates a set amount per full-time enrollment in credit-bearing courses. Since most of the Welfare-to-Work programs are non-credit courses (typically because they are less than college level), funding must be obtained from targeted programs.

Staff responsible for fundraising at all three colleges expressed frustration that there is no reward system in state funding formulas for their programs. Programs that rely on special funding pools are not sustainable in the long run. If the funds run out or an administration with different priorities comes in, funding can be cut abruptly, even if the program is highly successful. The three options programs are left with are to get very good at writing grant proposals, to lobby for more state funds, or to change the programs to credit courses.

For states such as Washington that have earmarked welfare savings for skills upgrading, at least a temporary source of funding is available for turning Welfare-to-Work into career progression programs. The State of Washington has facilitated the Job Ladder Partnership at Shoreline and the modular programs at South Seattle by designating

funds specifically for developing job ladders for low-income workers. Washington is one of the few states that are spending all of their TANF caseload savings (the state's TANF savings have been spent by 2002) on training, placement, job retention and advancement, and child care.

South Seattle is using the TANF funds to design modular programs that earn college credits and thus fall under the FTE funding formula. This involved a complete revamping of every course and going through an approval process, both at the college level and before the State Board of Community Colleges. Program development for SSCC took approximately one year and cost \$40,000 in taking staff from their regular assignments to do program development. The idea of credit-bearing modular courses may be easier to implement in Washington because of the state education reform of the 1990s. The secondary education system is moving from diplomas based on seat time to certificates of mastery based on skills, which will be accepted by all colleges and universities in the state. Community colleges in other states attempting to move to a system using proficiency-based certificates might have more difficulty in gaining employer and public acceptance of the idea. In Washington the preparations have already been laid, making implementation easier.

In Colorado the extent to which community colleges get TANF funds for education and training programs is determined at the county level. The Colorado legislature moved the responsibility for appropriating TANF funds to county commissions, which receive funds based on a formula and allocate them as they see fit. The city of Denver expanded eligibility for TANF training funds (\$3.8 million annually) to the working poor (defined as being within 225 percent of the poverty line) and dedicated the remaining TANF savings to support services in housing, medical care, child care, mental health services, and other support services. Denver County is one of the few counties that allocated much funding for education and training.

The Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System is educating community college presidents on advocating for more education and training funds from the county commissions. Mary Crabbe Gershwin, director of systems planning, laments that obtaining state funding has become a retail sales game. "We're telling our presidents that it's not sufficient to know good programs," she says. "We need to know who is making key policy and funding decisions. We need

to do more advocacy.” But she cautions that this is not an easy task. “Presidents have faculty, capital construction, and other needs facing them. Low-wage workers aren’t on their radar screen.” For the State Community College Board, this means that Gershwin and her staff have to move the issue up on the agenda by aligning and integrating low-wage worker progression with other programs that presidents value. Her office works with presidents in connecting low-wage worker progression to a college’s information technology strategy or its employer partnership strategy.

States differ on work first requirements. In Colorado, one hour a day of vocational training counts as work. Shoreline’s 12-week program does not qualify under Washington’s work first regulations as work activity. In Washington, only 30 percent of total participation in work first can be vocational training. What this means is that social service agencies are not likely to refer clients to three-month training programs, even though all evidence demonstrates that more extensive training (even three month’s worth) increases wages and reduces dependence.

Even in states that have earmarked funds for wage progression, staff must be entrepreneurial in their search for funds. Providing support services is a challenge for the colleges. The directors and staff at all of the programs spend a considerable amount of time writing proposals for funding to government agencies, foundations, and employers. The Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System plays a key role by helping colleges identify foundation and government funding sources for program development and implementation.

### **Community Colleges Need Partners**

Partnerships allow organizations to provide services together or invest resources to their mutual advantage. Because community colleges’ primary mission is education, they need partners to ensure that they are providing the skills that employers need and the support services that students need. All of the colleges have effective partnerships with employers, social service agencies, and community organizations.

Employers are key partners in all three programs. Their contributions include helping with curriculum development, establishing performance competencies, teaching courses, offering scholarships, and

providing internships. In return, employers get better prepared workers. While this relationship seems obvious, training programs can falter even when demand is high. In the late 1990s, when labor demand in hazardous waste management was growing rapidly, South Seattle and two other community colleges in the area witnessed declining enrollments. The other colleges closed their programs, either from the mistaken assumption that declining enrollments meant lack of demand, or because they did not want to commit resources to overhaul them. But the problem was that the programs were not preparing students for the certifications demanded by industry. President Mitchell chose to invest in building a new program from the ground up because he believed that it served two important audiences—those trying to get off TANF, and local employers. He built it by developing relationships with key employers.

Once employers trust the quality of workers hired through community college- or CBO-run training programs, they are more inclined to contribute funds for training. In Denver, Norwest Bank contributed approximately \$40,000 in resources for each cohort in the financial services track of the Essential Skills program. The donated resources include one week of in-house training, mentoring, program supervision, and social and professional events. Other agencies subsidize internships. In Denver, Head Start agencies and Catholic Charities pay 15 percent of payroll costs for interns. Eight Denver hospitals provide on-site training for internships and have committed to offering paid internships (though at the time of this writing they are subsidized through either TANF funds or Welfare-to-Work wage subsidies). The community college-employer partnerships certainly are of the “win-win” variety.

Getting there has taken a lot of work. It takes awhile for each partner to figure out its expectations of the other. Educators often want to hold meetings that include employers while developing or revamping programs. Employers are typically more results oriented and get frustrated because they perceive that nothing is happening. They want to know from the start what’s being offered and how it will benefit them. As one community college staff member stated, “They don’t want partnerships, they want results.”

It may even take awhile for community college outreach staff to figure out who is the right person to contact for a potential business partner. Often the person who needs to be convinced of the need for

training is the supervisor who has to pull someone off the line for training. "You'll only make your case," Baker warns, "if you show them that training is going to make their lives easier and improve return on investment." Working with employers, the college does a literacy audit of competencies and develops a curriculum around needs.

An issue all of the colleges face in trying to be relevant to employers is balancing employers' need for customized training with students' need to have more general training applicable in multiple employment settings. The colleges find it difficult to generate sufficient demand for courses specific to any one employer. Yet even with cooperation from several employers, it is not easy to develop a program that meets the needs of a large group of small- to medium-sized employers.

The second set of partnerships community college programs need is for providing extensive support services. President Mitchell of South Seattle sees student services as the biggest problem for community colleges committed to serving low-income populations. He suggests that most colleges have rather rigid systems that will have to be restructured. Further, funding streams to support extensive services are usually temporary. Indeed, a large body of literature on community college programs points to the importance of support services in program completion for low-income students. These include transportation, child care, career counseling, life skills development, and case management (Fitzgerald 1993; Fitzgerald and Jenkins 1997; Harrison, Weiss, and Gant 1995; Harrison and Weiss 1996; Jenkins and Fitzgerald 1998; Meléndez and Falcón 1999). Community colleges do not have the funding or the infrastructure to provide all of the support services students need. While community colleges can provide some of these services, it may not be desirable for them to move too far away from their educational mission. Fitzgerald and Jenkins (1997) suggest that community colleges that offer too many social services are in danger of mission creep and that the most successful community colleges are those that establish partnerships to provide services. Common partners are social service agencies and CBOs.

Two of the programs have CBOs as partners. The CBOs mainly provide referrals, both to the college program and to support services. However, some CBOs provide the support services and soft skills training. Others work with graduates on job-keeping skills.

Another important partnership for all of the programs is with gov-



ernment agencies implementing state Welfare-to-Work and TANF programs. South Seattle has just remodeled a building that will be used as a One-Stop Career Center.<sup>7</sup> The Department of Social and Human Services will be located on campus, allowing students easy access to services. Staff estimate that the facility will bring several hundred students a week onto campus. While this may seem like an obvious choice, in some states one-stop services are located far from community college campuses, making it more difficult for these students to gain access to education (see McCormick 1999).

### **The Role of a Labor Market Intermediary Is More Complex than Connecting Supply and Demand**

The three programs demonstrate that community colleges can be quite effective placement intermediaries. Community College of Denver has worked with firms on improving productivity through education and training. "Once supervisors understand that classes can impact their team's productivity," Baker notes, "their involvement with the program moves from accommodating to participating." In an internal document Baker elaborates on how the community college becomes more important to the employer:

Looking back at the development of our partner relationships, we can see a shift in roles, from educational provider to a blend of educational provider/organizational consultant. This shift is the outgrowth of numerous factors. First, we are in a unique position to gain access to valuable information about the problems that employees experience in doing their jobs. Much of this information is seldom captured within normal channels of communication because of the hesitancy of employees and/or supervisors to call attention to situations that are inefficient or problematic. Some of what we learn has immediate relevance to our education and training concerns, while other information relates to broader organizational issues. Our skill is in capturing this information and sharing it with our partners in a constructive format.

Baker cites a number of instances where she has convinced companies to invest in worker upgrading by demonstrating that it can be justified by productivity increases. Community College of Denver contracted to teach a 12-hour basic math class to employees in the shipping



department of a food processing plant. The company had shifted to a just-in-time delivery system, which brought an increasing number of clerical and accounting errors. Most of the employees had been with the company 20–25 years, and many did not have a high school diploma. Baker proposed that the company develop a pre- and post-test and asked that the company also monitor errors in the shipping department. The improvements were so dramatic that all plant employees were put through the course. Once management saw the evidence in return on investment data, it was willing to pay for instruction. The bottom line is that employers need evidence of return on investment if they are to invest in training.

Community colleges have little leverage, however, as progressive intermediaries. While outreach staff have been able to demonstrate returns on investment for training, there are few instances where employers were influenced to create better jobs because the community college provided them a stream of reliable workers.

Career advancement opportunities are not simply a function of industry structure, but also of choices particular employers make. Bank teller programs illustrate this.<sup>8</sup> To date, Community College of Denver has had little success in developing career ladders in the financial services area, Baker reports, although the program is very successful in placing graduates and Norwest Bank is an active partner. In 2001, CCD planned to address this by working with the American Institute of Banking and partner banks to identify appropriate courses for program graduates.

Banking is an interesting case for examining the potential for career ladder and wage progression strategies. It appears that the pendulum swung as far as it could go in the direction of deskilling entry-level jobs. Now, some banks, unable to keep up with the high turnover inherent to these high-stress jobs, are adding skills to existing jobs and creating advancement opportunities. The extent to which this marks a significant trend remains to be seen.

In the past 15 years, banking has been changed by direct depositing, telephone banking, the Internet, and, most significantly, automated teller machines (ATMs). The effect of ATMs has dramatically restructured the job of teller but for the most part has not upgraded it.<sup>9</sup> In some banks the use of ATMs for routine banking transactions has been accompanied by a shift toward more sophisticated teller jobs with greater skill

requirements. More frequently, though, tellers still conduct only routine transactions while customer service representatives and officers—typically college graduates—open new accounts and sell bank products such as loans and CDs. The percentage of banking jobs accounted for by professional occupations (those requiring post-secondary education) has grown dramatically (see Gester 1999).

With the emphasis on sales, many banks changed telling from a predominantly full-time to a part- and peak-time job with even less opportunity for moving into better or full-time positions.<sup>10</sup> Seeing little growth opportunity, many tellers quit this high-stress job after a few months. Indeed, human resource directors at six large Chicago banks working with teller training programs revealed that their annual turnover rates were between 60 and 80 percent. Two directors mentioned that the increase in part-time and peak-time scheduling has reduced employee loyalty, particularly in the banks that make it clear to prospective employees that neither part- nor peak-time jobs are stepping stones to full-time positions. But treating tellers as casual labor seems more cost-effective to managers than making the teller position a permanent first rung on a career ladder.

Interviews with several human resource officers suggest this strategy is changing for some banks as they recognize that tellers are the front line for customer contact. Rather than treating these front-line workers as casual laborers, some banks are recognizing the value of investing more in their training, creating full-time opportunities, adding benefits, and offering better wages. These decisions are the result of seeing that customers are better served with front line staff who are knowledgeable. It may be the case that similar observations will be made by employers in other service industries, creating a window of opportunity for community colleges to expand entry-level training programs into career ladder programs.

Overall, these examples illustrate how community colleges are being proactive in responding to the needs of business. That community colleges have a limited capacity to affect skill demand is not a criticism but rather a reality. As one administrator put it, “When it happens, it’s a bonus. When it doesn’t, colleges can help students find ways to cumulate skills and move to other types of employment.”

## **Wage Progression Strategies Won't Work for Everyone**

Despite a supportive state government, a spirit of cooperation between employers and the community colleges, and a well-designed education or training program, it is not easy moving people into better jobs. Most of the programs are too new to have much data on career advancement. The most common comment I heard in talking with faculty and staff at these and other community colleges was, "It's hard."

Although some graduates are eager to continue their education while working, others find that the adjustment from not working to going to school, then to work, is enough of a life change. "When you're dealing with someone who is a single parent, and has been out of the labor force, going to school is very new, intensive, and stressful," Shoreline's Lederer explains. "Then they are placed in a job. They have a lot vested in that job. Several students have declined to go back to school right away, telling me that they need to focus on the job if they're going to succeed."

Furthermore, not everyone wants to advance, Shoreline's Windle points out. Career progression programs are great for students who are eager to move ahead and only need someone to help them figure out how to overcome obstacles. Others are not interested in working, let alone advancing, no matter how much help they are given. Windle sees these attitudinal differences in different classes. He notes that, in general, students in the evening class seem to have more life barriers and both less desire and less ability to overcome them. Many of these students are enrolled because they have been told they have to do something or they will be off TANF. In contrast, students in the weekend class are noticeably more ambitious. He attributes the difference to the fact that most of the weekend students are working and thus are better able to see possibilities for advancement.

It is these differences in attitude that concern employers. Many employers are not as concerned about specific skills as they are about attitude. This is why the five programs place a lot of emphasis on soft skills.

The issue is more complex, however, than learning the right attitude. Windle explains that students face a lot of dignity issues on their first jobs. He relates the story of one woman who had emotional issues that made it difficult for her to get along with people on the job. After

several years, she had held no job for longer than four months, and always put the blame on the employer, who, she said, didn't treat her with respect. Only after she became open to exploring how her interaction style might alienate people was she able to stay with one job for over a year. Windle says he has to guide students through matters like "picking and choosing their battles, not quitting until they have another job, the right way and wrong way to quit a job, having a backup plan."

For those who do want to continue their education while working, a solution may be to incorporate learning into work time, but not too many employers pay for employees to go to school on company time, particularly if they are new. Some employers working with the Job Ladders program have realized that becoming a learning organization offers a good strategy for reducing turnover and maintaining a more committed and better qualified labor force. For the most part, however, employees must upgrade their skills on their own time.

These comments from staff are more realistic than pessimistic. There are people who can move from basic literacy to a college education. They are the exceptions. Programs cannot be built around the assumption that everyone will follow a path of lifelong learning that ends in college. This does not mean the opportunity should not be available. It does mean that other paths to living-wage employment are needed, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and unionization of more service sector jobs (see Fitzgerald and Carlson 2000).

## **CONCLUSIONS: A STRATEGY FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO BE LABOR MARKET INTERMEDIARIES**

These successful career ladder programs are small in scale relative to the need (the Conference Board report estimates there are between four and five million full-time workers earning poverty-level wages). Increased state funding for skills upgrading would help community colleges expand these programs. But if community colleges are to act as progressive intermediaries, they cannot do it alone. This level of intervention requires a two-pronged policy agenda. First, states have to make skills upgrading—including training for those making the transition from welfare to work and incumbent worker training for low-wage workers—a priority. This requires funding to community colleges for

career ladder programs and to businesses for training workers. Second, local labor market intermediaries are needed to make the connections between supply and demand. Local labor market intermediaries connect economic and workforce development in key sectors of the regional economy. This approach is known as a sectoral strategy. Sectoral strategies are receiving considerable attention in both economic and workforce development circles because of their focus on growth industries and their potential to create career advancement opportunities for low-wage workers. In sectoral strategies an intermediary provides solutions to industry problems and uses those solutions to improve training for incumbent workers and increase access to the industry for disadvantaged workers (Dresser and Rogers 1998, p. 71).

Clark and Dawson (1995) define sectoral initiatives as those that

- target a particular occupation within an industry,
- intervene by becoming a valued actor within the industry that employs the occupation,
- exist for the primary purpose of assisting low-income people to obtain decent employment, and
- eventually create systemic change within that occupation's labor market.

Shoreline Community College is a partner in a larger sectoral initiative, the Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI).<sup>11</sup> Seattle is one of six cities that make up the Annie E. Casey Foundation's eight-year Jobs Initiative. Started in 1995, the \$30 million Jobs Initiative supports local government, community organizations, and educational institutions in pursuing a systems reform agenda that places people from low-income communities in jobs that provide family-supporting benefits and have advancement potential.

As a labor market intermediary, SJI facilitates and coordinates a network of community organizations, community colleges, employers, unions, and government agencies to make all the links necessary to get people into jobs in targeted sectors of the regional economy. A targeted sector team—composed of a sector manager, a broker, CBOs, and community colleges—works to create better links between supply and demand. The sector managers and brokers are SJI staff, while the CBOs and community colleges are subcontracted to provide services. Brokers are people or organizations with strong ties to industry that market

SJI to employers and serve as the liaison among employers, training providers, and CBOs. The brokers help employers experiencing labor shortages or high turnover identify workforce and training needs and work with the CBOs that refer candidates for job openings. In addition, brokers engage employers by involving them with community colleges in curriculum development and by encouraging them to provide internships. As the brokers work with employers to learn their level of satisfaction with participants, they suggest curriculum changes to community colleges. This division of responsibilities allows each organization to focus on its core competencies. Brokers understand employer needs; community colleges provide education and training; CBOs provide recruitment, referrals to social support services, case management, soft skills, and post-employment follow-up.

With funds from the state incumbent worker training program (the Job Skills Program), Shoreline and SJI partnered in the Washington Incumbent Worker Training Demonstration Project. The project was started in 1997 to test whether state customized training programs could promote the development of job ladders for low-income workers by marketing incumbent worker training in targeted industries. The Shoreline-SJI demonstration launched separate initiatives in aerospace and cosmetology. Lederer, who worked with SJI at the time, found that the sector-based approach was successful in organizing employers around training in the aerospace industry (1998, p. 11). He writes that “this finding is supported by the fact that Shoreline Community College and hundreds of aerospace supplier firms represented by the Washington Aerospace Alliance were able to cooperatively develop and receive an industry-wide Jobs Skills Program Grant to fund upgrade machine operator training . . . [It] remains to be seen whether the development of these upgrade training opportunities will, in fact, result in job promotion and wage progression.”

Yet Lederer says that neither the cosmetology nor the aerospace prototypes have achieved the scale and scope necessary to transform local labor markets in those sectors. This is partly because not enough time was allotted in the demonstration program to create that level of change in industry practice. But a big part of the failure is that employers are unwilling to make the high-skill, high-wage choice if they can be profitable following a low-skill, low-wage path. Indeed, while SJI has been successful overall in providing people in low-income communities

with access to jobs paying at least \$8.00 an hour, it has had little success in convincing employers to create more career ladders (Fitzgerald and Leigh 2002). Despite this, community colleges, acting independently, have the capacity to be effective placement intermediaries.

All three programs have been successful in connecting poor people to jobs to which they otherwise would not have had access. Yet Shoreline's collaboration with the state's incumbent worker training program and SJI illustrates that even when state training policy, community colleges, and local labor market intermediaries are acting in concert, it is difficult to affect the demand side.

We need to take the lessons derived from these initiatives and develop additional demonstration projects that have sufficient time to work. Further, we need to rethink how to provide incentives for employers to make the high-wage, high-skill choice. Community colleges are well positioned in current policy initiatives to become key providers of career ladder programs for incumbent workers. Most states have allocated funding for community colleges to develop new Welfare-to-Work programs and improve existing ones. It is likely community colleges will benefit from future federal incumbent worker funds as well. Thirteen cities received a total of \$11.2 million in Incumbent Worker Training Demonstration grants from the U.S. Department of Labor for projects that improve the job retention and career advancement of incumbent workers in key industries. Community colleges are key actors in all 13 partnerships. These initiatives are already demonstrating success, suggesting that more permanent incumbent worker training funds will become available to community colleges.

## Notes

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1. Both federal and state programs fund community colleges to retrain workers for new jobs, provide technical assistance to local employers, and provide customized training (see Bakum 1991; Brint and Karabel 1989; Rosenfeld 1994). These business outreach programs usually focus on small and medium-sized enterprises. Some community colleges provide these services as partners in Manufacturing Technology Centers (MTCs) and Manufacturing Outreach Centers (MOCs), created in 1988 as part of the federal Manufacturing Technology Extension Center Act. The MTCs and MOCs provide modernization assessment, analysis of training needs, technical assistance in adopting new technology and modern management practices, workforce training, and advice on entering new markets (Shapira, Youtie, and Roessner 1996). Many states fund business outreach and technology transfer programs in all of their community colleges (Clark and Dobson 1991; Flynn and Forrant 1995).
2. One credit is earned for every 10–12 lecture hours, 22 lab hours, or 33 work experience hours.
3. A Phase I assessment establishes the potential for contamination by examining the deeds of the property and surrounding sites. If a strong likelihood is established, a Phase II study samples parts of the property for the presence of contaminants. A Phase III study is an even more complete analysis done by dividing the property into a grid and sampling segments in order to determine the extent of contamination.
4. These initiatives support local government, community organizations, and educational institutions in connecting people in low-income communities to training and living-wage jobs (at least \$8 an hour) with benefits. Seattle is one of five cities that make up the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative demonstration program. Started in 1995, the Jobs Initiative seeks to change how metropolitan labor markets work for low-income communities. Each site receives approximately \$700,000 per year for planning and implementation and must provide matching funds from other sources. The King County Jobs Initiative has similar goals but does not receive funding from the foundation.
5. In addition, King County and the City of Seattle have received a \$147,500 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Job Training and Development Demonstration Pilots Program to train people in this field. The pilots "bring together community groups, job training organizations, educators, labor groups, investors, lenders, developers, and other affected parties to address the issue of providing environmental employment and training for residents in communities impacted by brownfields. The goals of the Pilots are to facilitate cleanup of [brownfield] sites contaminated with hazardous substances and prepare trainees for employment in the environmental field, including training in alternative or innovative treatment technologies." <<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/job.htm>> (accessed 2000). The two-year grant pays for 50 students from low-income neighborhoods to complete programs in environmental assessment and cleanup techniques. The initiative targets the Duwamish Corridor of Seattle, an industrial area with more than 50 abandoned, contaminated sites needing cleanup and redevelopment. KCJI clients take the 40-hour HAZWOP module and after



- employment continue taking modules to get more certifications. Training is provided by KCJI and TCB. The grant provides funding to expand the program and pay tuition for KCJI participants for up to 176 hours of credit. As the program expands at South Seattle, KCJI clients may take these credits there.
6. Several states are moving to performance-based funding. These states typically use some combination of completion and job placement rates in allocating funds (see Fitzgerald 1998 for more detail).
  7. One-Stop Career Centers are at the core of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998, which consolidates federal job training, adult education and literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs into a more streamlined and flexible workforce development system. The one-stops are the centralized point of access for all federally funded employment programs. The overriding goal of the One-Stop Employment Center approach is to place people in jobs as quickly as possible. Individuals use the one-stops to find jobs, to find out about and access occupational education programs and career development services. The majority of clients are eligible only for a core set of job search services. Eligible clients can access job training through the one-stops.
  8. Bank Tellers and Beyond, offered by Wright College, one of Chicago's City Colleges, is a noteworthy program that could not be included in this study because staff were very involved in revamping the program. Although the program's director, Nancy Bellew, had envisioned career ladders as part of the program, it took almost five years to interest banks in anything but entry-level training. The case is interesting in that it reveals the role of persistence of program staff in working with business partners in moving from entry-level to skills upgrade training. From its inception, the program has had all the right stuff—good curriculum, employer involvement, support services, and post-placement follow up. Yet the retention rate of graduates at most banks was initially no higher than that of those hired "off the street." Few tellers advanced. Despite repeated efforts by Bellew, the banks expressed little interest in the college developing further courses to build skills for advancement. Five years later, two of the original bank partners are hiring almost all students as soon as they graduate. LaSalle Bank has reported a 68 percent retention rate of tellers since 1997. Almost half, 48 percent, have been retained longer than one year. Of all program graduates hired, 38 percent have been promoted to Teller 2 (see Fitzgerald and Carlson, 2000).
  9. ATMs allow banks to serve customers better and to reduce transaction costs significantly. According to the American Bankers Association a teller transaction costs a bank about \$1.07, while the same transaction conducted at an ATM costs 27 cents. In 1975, fewer than 10 million ATM transactions were initiated for a total of \$1 billion in transactions. By 1995 that number had risen to 9.7 billion transactions processed at 123,000 ATM terminals and valued at \$650 billion.
  10. Peak-time workers are used to cover high traffic hours such as late afternoons and weekends. The key difference between part- and peak-time jobs is that peak time workers receive higher wages but are not eligible for benefits.
  11. Of course, the majority of students who need such assistance at Shoreline and South Seattle are not affiliated with the Seattle Jobs Initiative. The colleges have to provide services for these students.

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Edwin Meléndez

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W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research  
300 S. Westnedge Avenue  
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